

Protection Methods Chart

Type of Method	Method Description	Effective against pregnancy? (“%” = “% effective”)	Effective against STDs/STIs?	Cost Range	Cost at Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts	Where can you get the method?	Side Effects (not all possible side effects are listed)
Abstinence/ Postponement	To not have sex/ postpone having sex until a later date.	Yes- it is the only method that is 100% effective, <i>if used perfectly.</i>	Yes- it is the only method that is 100% effective, <i>if used perfectly.</i>	Free.	Free.	You don't have to go anywhere to get this method.	None.
External Condom/ Male Condom	Covers the penis with a thin layer of latex or polyurethane (plastic) that will act as a barrier between partners. Cannot be reused.	Perfect use: 98% Typical use: 85%	Yes, but not 100% effective. (External/ Internal condoms are the only methods that are effective against some STIs.)	\$0-\$20/6 pack of non-latex. \$0-\$13/3 pack of non-latex.	Latex condoms are free. \$4/3 pack non-latex. \$7/6 pack non-latex.	Drugstores, Doctor's offices, Health Clinics, School Nurses & Supermarkets.	Some people are allergic to latex or the spermicidal lubricant on condoms.
Internal Condom/ Female Condom	Inserted into the vagina or anus, it acts as a barrier between partners. It is made out of a thin layer of polyurethane. Cannot be reused.	Perfect use: 95% Typical use: 79%	Yes, but not 100% effective. (External/ Internal condoms are the only methods that are effective against some STIs.)	\$0-\$8/3 pack.	Free.	Drugstores, Doctor's offices, Health Clinics & Supermarkets.	Outer ring of the condom may slip into the vagina or anus during intercourse. Difficulty inserting condom.
Dental Dam	Thin layer of latex, plastic, or polyurethane that acts as a barrier between partners when placed over the vulva (outside of vagina) or anus during oral sex. Can also use non-microwavable saran wrap or a condom cut in half.	Not applicable; this device is used for oral sex only.	Yes, but not 100%. Using a barrier method during oral sex is effective against STIs.	\$0-\$7/5 pack.	\$1 for each polyurethane dental dam.	Doctor's offices, Health Clinics, condom shops. Saran wrap can be purchased at Supermarkets.	May irritate a partner with a latex allergy. Dental Dam may slip out of place if not held around the area receiving oral sex.
Emergency Contraception, “EC”, or “The morning after pill”	EC is designed to prevent pregnancy <i>after</i> unprotected vaginal intercourse. EC can prevent the release of an egg, thicken cervical mucus to keep sperm from entering the uterus (joining the egg) and may also prevent a fertilized egg from implanting in the uterus.	89% if taken within 5 days (120 hours) after unprotected sex. The sooner it is taken, the more effective. PPLM recommends taking both pills at once.	NO.	\$0-\$50 for one dose of pills. \$0-\$45 for medical visit.	\$25 (no discount) \$13 (151-300% FPL) \$10 (<150% FPL) Free under age 19. <i>(FPL= Federal Poverty Level)</i>	Available by prescription only if under age 17. Available over the counter if 17 or older.	May cause headache, nausea, and spot bleeding. Taking pills with food may prevent nausea.
Birth Control Pills “The Pill”	Birth Control Pills contain hormones that prevent the release of an egg, thicken cervical mucus to keep sperm from entering the uterus (joining the egg) and may also prevent a fertilized egg from implanting in the uterus.	Perfect use: 99.7% Typical use: 92%	NO.	\$0-\$40 per monthly pill pack. \$0-\$30 for initial medical exam.	\$25 (no discount) \$13 (151-300% FPL) \$12 (<150% FPL) Free under age 19.	Birth Control Pills are a prescription medication that must be prescribed by a clinician.	May cause irregular bleeding, headaches, nausea, depression, dizziness, and weight gain or loss.
Depo-Provera “The Shot”	Depo-Provera is injected every 3 months. It contains the hormone progesterone, which prevents the release of an egg, thickens cervical mucus to keep sperm from entering the uterus (joining the egg) and may also prevent a fertilized egg from implanting in the uterus.	Perfect use: 99.7% Typical use: 97% (as long as the woman gets the injection on time)	NO.	\$0-\$60 per injection. \$0-\$60 per medical exam.	Prices = per injection. \$40 (no discount) \$20 (151-300% FPL) \$16 (<150% FPL) Free under age 19.	Depo-Provera is a prescription medication that must be injected by a clinician.	May cause loss of menstruation, irregular bleeding, headaches, depression, increased appetite, and calcium depletion.
Ortho-Evra “The Patch”	Ortho-Evra is a plastic patch that sticks to the skin. The patch contains hormones that are absorbed through the bloodstream. The hormones work in the same way as those in Birth Control Pills.	Perfect use: 99.7% Typical use: 92%	NO.	\$0-\$40 per box of 3 patches (1 month supply). \$0-\$60 per medical exam.	Prices = 3 patches. \$36 (no discount) \$15 (151-300% FPL) \$14 (<150% FPL) Free under age 19.	A clinician must prescribe Ortho-Evra.	May experience breast discomfort, headache, skin irritation at the patch site, nausea, abdominal pain, menstrual cramps.

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NuvaRing “The Ring”	NuvaRing is a vinyl acetate ring that is inserted into the vagina. The ring contains hormones that flow from the ring into the bloodstream. The hormones work in the same way as those in Birth Control Pills.	Perfect use: 99.7% Typical use: 92%	NO.	\$0-27 per ring (1 month’s supply) \$0-\$60 per medical exam.	Prices= monthly supply \$25 (no discount) \$13 (151-300% FPL) \$10 (<150% FPL) Free under age 19.	A clinician must prescribe NuvaRing.	May cause headaches, increased vaginal discharge, vaginal irritation or infection, and nausea.
Implanon *This form of contraception was approved by the U.S. FDA in 2006*	Implanon is a matchstick-sized plastic rod that is put under the skin of a woman’s arm. It provides contraception for up to 3 years. The hormones in the rod prevent the release of an egg and thicken cervical mucus to keep sperm from entering the uterus.	Estimated 99.9%, though results of long-term studies will not be available for some time.	NO.	\$550 for rod and insertion; some health insurances will cover costs.	\$550 for rod and insertion (no discount) \$425 (151-300% FPL) \$363 (<150% FPL & teen) Add’l removal fee on sliding scale \$300-\$75.	A clinician must insert and remove the rod.	Most common side effect is irregular bleeding. May cause weight gain, acne and headaches.
Spermicide -Foam -Suppository -Jelly, Cream -(VCF) Vaginal Contraceptive Film	Spermicides are inserted into the vagina before intercourse. Spermicides kill sperm.	Foams, creams, gels, vaginal suppositories, and vaginal film: Perfect use: 82% Typical use: 71%	NO. Spermicides can irritate the skin, causing micro-tears that could increase the risk for some STIs.	\$0-\$13 for applicator kits of foam or jelly. \$0-\$18 for VCF or pack of 18 suppositories.	Jelly/Foam: \$6 \$4 under age 19 VCF (3 sheets): \$2 Free under age 19	Drugstores, Doctor’s offices, Health Clinics, and Supermarkets.	May irritate the skin of the vagina, penis, or anus.
Today Sponge	Today Sponge is a polyurethane foam containing spermicide that blocks the pathway of sperm into the uterus and kills sperm.	Perfect use in parous women: 80%; nulliparous women: 91% Typical use in parous women: 68%; nulliparous women: 84%	NO. Spermicides can irritate the skin, causing micro-tears that could increase the risk for some STIs.	Buy at select stores for \$7.50-\$9/ 3 pack.	Not currently available.	Drugstores, Doctor’s offices, Health Clinics, and Supermarkets.	May irritate the skin of the vagina, penis, or anus. Cannot be used during menstruation.
Diaphragm “Fem-Cap”	Barrier methods that cover the cervix in order to block the pathway of sperm. Must be used with a spermicide, which kills sperm.	Diaphragm Perfect use: 94% Diaphragm Typical use: 84% Fem Cap Perfect use: 86%	NO.	\$0-\$40 for Diaphragm. \$0-\$150 for medical exam.	Med. exam/ diaphragm \$105/\$25 (no discount) \$53/\$13 (151-300% FPL) \$30/\$10 (<150% FPL) \$20/free(< age 19) Fem Cap not currently available.	Both Diaphragm and FemCaps need prescriptions. FemCaps may be ordered online by the patient as long as the Rx is faxed in	Can be difficult to use. May cause irritation if allergic to latex, silicone, or spermicide. Cannot be used during menstruation or infection.
IUD (intrauterine device)- Paragard IUS (intrauterine system)- Mirena	The IUD and IUS are both small plastic devices that are inserted into a woman’s uterus. The IUD may be left in place for 12 years. The IUS, which contains progesterone, is effective for 5 years.	Paragard: Perfect use: 99.4% Typical use: 99.2% Mirena: Perfect use: 99.8% Typical use: 99.8%	NO.	IUD- \$0- \$500 IUS- \$0- \$540 for medical exam and insertion.	(\$ includes device+insertion) Paragard / Mirena \$506/\$546 (no discount) \$256/\$276 (151-300% FPL) \$170/\$186 (<150% FPL) \$50/\$50 (under age 19)	A clinician must prescribe, insert, and remove the IUD and the IUS.	IUD: may increase cramping and cause heavier and longer periods. IUS: may cause breakthrough bleeding.
Sterilization -Essure -Laparoscopic Tubal Ligation: F -Vasectomy: M	Sterilization is an operation that is intended to prevent the sperm from joining the egg by blocking either the woman’s fallopian tubes (carry an egg) or a man’s vas deferens (carry the sperm).	Essure: 99.8% Laparoscopic Tubal Sterilization: 99.5% Vasectomy: 99.9%	NO.	Check with your Dr. & insurance company for prices. Insurance will often cover the cost.	Essure sterilization is available & is covered by most insurance companies. Tubal Ligation and Vasectomy not currently available.	Sterilization for females and males is a medical procedure that is performed by a clinician.	Mild bleeding or infection may occur right after the operation, reaction to anesthetic, reversibility cannot be guaranteed.